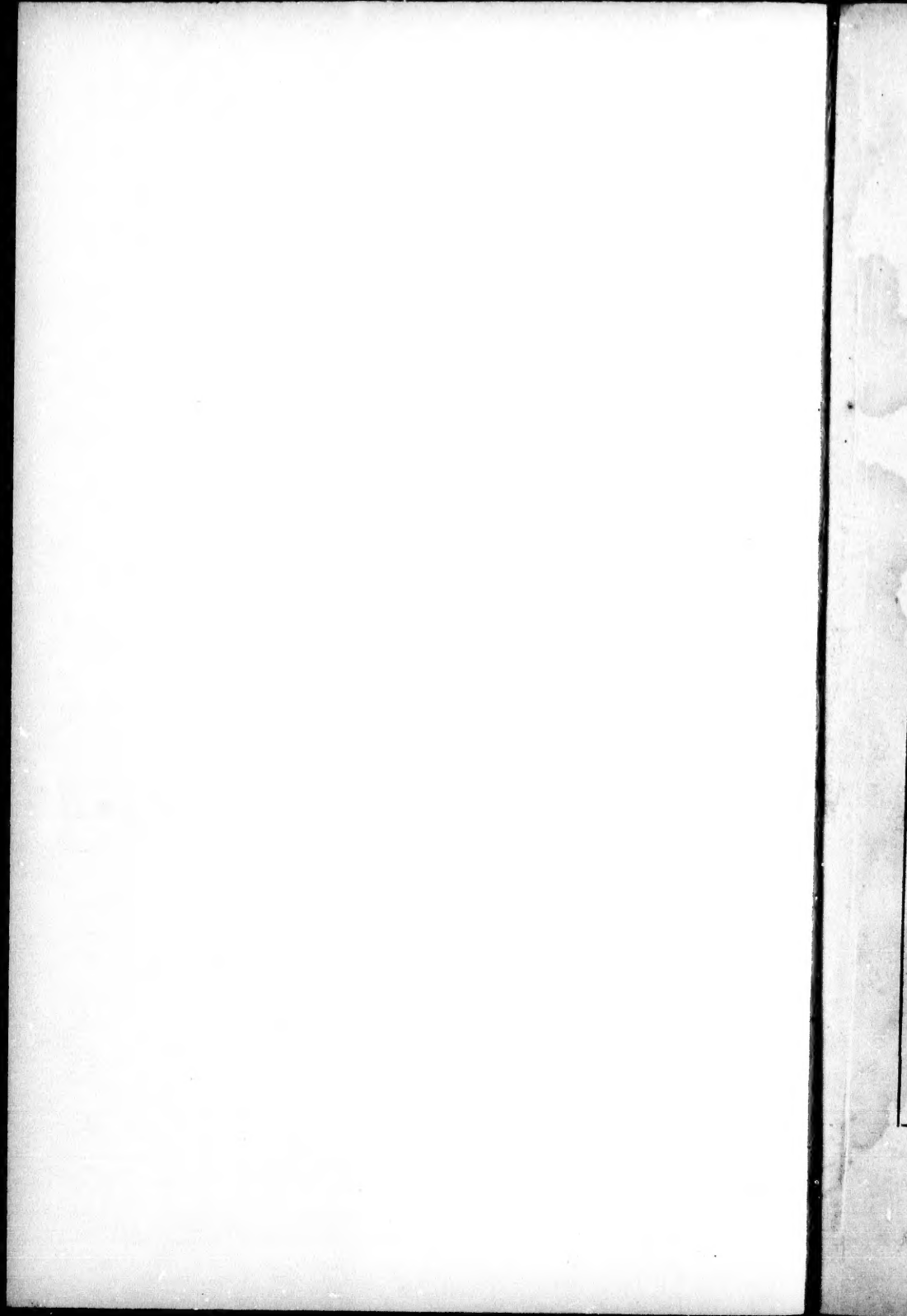




A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

TRINITY CHURCH, IN THE PARISH OF ST.
JOHN, N. B.,

ON THE 8th DECEMBER, 1857,

BY

THE REV. I. W. D. GRAY, D. D.,

AND

DESIGNED TO RECOMMEND THE PRINCIPLES

OF THE

LOYALISTS OF 1783.

ST. JOHN, N. B.,

J. & A. McMILLAN, PRINTERS, 78, PRINCE Wm. STREET,
1857.

*sent July 1. 1862.
70 years 280 of Repts*



● J. W. T. Gray V.D.
died Feb 1, 1962, aged 70 years

P R E F A C E .

WITHIN a few years, several of that Loyal body of men who came to our Province in 1783, and who, in different stations have been known and respected amongst us, have passed into eternity. Very few, either in our city or Province, remain, of the original number who displayed on that occasion, their devoted attachment to the British Crown and Constitution. As our attention has been of late, most painfully directed to scenes, where principles of a very opposite character have been exhibited and as the perpetrators of the foul deeds in India have had their sympathizers nearer home, even amongst men who are enjoying all the blessings of British Laws and Institutions, the author of the following pages deemed it a fit time to recur to, and commend to his congregation, those principles of Loyalty and integrity which were characteristic of their Predecessors in this community, and for this purpose availed himself of the occasion afforded, by the death of one of our citizens who came with the Loyalists in 1783, and who, though but an infant at that time, has, in after life, most zealously upheld that standard of loyalty for which they were distinguished. The Sermon was not designed for publication, but is committed to the Press, at the request of several members of his congregation, who are anxious to perpetuate the principles which it advocates.

ECCLES. I., 4.

"ONE GENERATION PASSETH AWAY AND ANOTHER GENERATION
COMETH."

THIS is a truth which we all admit: it is a plain matter of fact which all are acquainted with; so certain, so indisputable, that we never think of reasoning about it. And yet, we seldom notice it. The process is a gradual one. The boundaries of distinct generations are not, in general, clearly defined for us. The transition from one to another goes on silently and imperceptibly, so that the terminations of the Old, and beginnings of the New, are not obvious to those who mingle with both. Sometimes, however, the case is different. Peculiar circumstances lead us to fix our attention upon the men of a certain period, to mark them in the commencement and progress of their career, and to view them apart from other men, as it were a generation standing by themselves. Thus, of the descendants of Jacob who went down into Egypt, it was said in after times, "And Joseph died—and all that generation."* So, of the heads of families among the Israelities who left Egypt at the time of the Egress, we read that "The Lord made them wander in the wilderness forty years until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed."† And again, at the death of Joshua, who reached the venerable age of a hundred and ten years, it was said, "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres—and also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."‡

*Exod. i., 6.

†Num. xxxii., 13.

‡Judges ii., 9-10.

It is now somewhat more than the allotted term of man's life, his three score years and ten, since the men who may be regarded as the founders of this community first placed their habitations upon its rugged shores. It is indeed but a little season, a narrow span, a small fraction of the course of time; yet long enough to have comprised within it, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and disappointments, the youth and manhood and old age of almost an entire generation of men. Our Province still retains a small remnant of that expatriated band who came to it in 1783, but they are few and far between, "as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done."* You look, my brethren, in the country and in the town, in your streets, your dwellings and your churches for the faces you were once familiar with, but to every inquiring glance, the vacant scene replies—"Your fathers where are they?"† "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."

This fact, my brethren, has very lately been recalled to our minds by the removal of one of our respected citizens,‡ whose term of years corresponded with the period I have just alluded to, and who had early imbibed, and uniformly cherished the principles and feelings of the Loyalists.

I purpose to avail myself of the occasion by showing what were the principles of the former generation, and commending them to the present one, as principles possessing an intrinsic value, in which revolving years can effect no diminution or change.

I. Mistake not, my Brethren, the object I have in view. It is not to pronounce a panegyric, or even express an opinion upon the *spiritual condition* of the persons I have referred to. How far they went in the attainment of vital religion, or how far they fell short of it, are points which

* Isa. xxiv., 13.

† Zech. i., 5.

‡ WALKER TISDALE, Esq.

we must leave to the decision of Him, "unto whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid." This will be known to us hereafter. It cannot be known now. But there are some things we do know in regard to the Loyalists, which were in full accordance with the doctrines and precepts of our holy faith; and which, as such, are worthy of our respect and imitation.

I name *one* of them; and that, certainly, not the least important, when I say that—*they believed in the Bible as a revelation from God.* We have abroad at the present day various theories that are hostile to this belief, that tend to unsettle men's minds in reference to the Scriptures, by perverting their meaning, or denying their plenary inspiration, or elevating to equal authority with them, the vain traditions of men. The Loyalists, as a body, were free from these pernicious errors. They regarded the Bible as God's message to man. They held the book in veneration, as the record of inspired wisdom. They verily believed that holy men of old, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, when they spake and wrote what is inscribed upon the sacred pages of Scripture. And it was a great point to be impressed with this conviction. Where it is firmly seated in the heart, it must exercise a certain control over a man's life; it must restrain him from many sins he would otherwise commit: often humble him under the recollection of those that have been committed, and lead him to discharge many duties he would otherwise neglect. It must impress upon him, to some extent, at least, a sense of his responsibility to God, and prepare the way for the reception of the vital truths contained in the Bible when they are once unfolded to his mind. In order to be saved, a man must receive these vital truths. The mere belief in the Bible as a Divine Revelation will not suffice. But it is the beginning of the work. It must lie at the foundation of all the rest; and in all probability,

where it is a true, genuine, and settled conviction in the soul, the rest will follow. This elementary faith in Scripture, is for these reasons, a gift of incalculable value—value to the man who possesses it, value to the community where he dwells, value to the age in which he lives; and the absence of it, on the other hand, is a curse to the individual himself, and to the society in which he mingles. Better to have the faith of the humble cottager “who knows and knows no more, her Bible true,” than to have the brilliancy of a Voltaire or the wealth of Australian mines *without* it.

2. Another characteristic of the men I am describing, intimately associated with the former, and arising out of it, was a *respect for the ordinances of religion*. Few in number, alone in a newly adopted country, severed from the influences of older communities, they might have freed themselves if so disposed, from the restraints of religious observances. Had they preferred Atheism to a form of sound religion, they might have given it free scope in their infant colony, not by convening an assembly to proscribe the rites and ceremonies of religion, but simply by omitting to observe them, by leaving the Sabbath out of their calendar, and the temples of Jehovah out of their villages and towns, and suffering their rising families to grow up in ignorance of revelation, without God, without Christ, without hope in the world.” But did they pursue this course? No! my brethren! Infidelity was not the basis of their creed, and therefore “Sacrilège was no part of their doctrine of good works.”* So far from it, the erection of places of worship, where the Sabbath might be honoured, and religious rites observed, appears to have occupied their earliest thoughts, and the sacred edifice, within the walls of which we are assembled at this moment, bears a noble attestation to their zeal in this cause. And that zeal is

*Burke on French Revolution. p. 176.

worthy of commendation; for who can estimate the benefits that may accrue to successive generations, from the erection of a single church? True, men may build churches and frequent ordinances, and multiply ceremonies, without being *really* religious. Inferior motives may often lead to these results. But in a state of society where these motives could scarcely find scope for exercise, it is the fair as well as charitable presumption, that they were higher and better motives that actuated the forefathers of this community. And one thing at least is certain, that if these acts were not, in themselves, a *sufficient* evidence of vital piety, they are nevertheless a very *necessary* evidence of it. A person who possesses true religion, cannot be indifferent about these things. No man has a claim to be considered a religious man in any just sense of the term, who does not respect the Sabbath, the House of God, and the Ordinances that are observed within it.

3. I add another characteristic of the Loyalists, very closely allied to the former ones, when I say, *they were just in their dealings with their fellow-men*. There were, no doubt, exceptions to this rule. But this was the general character of the men who bore that honourable title. And so strongly was that principle of integrity felt among them, that the man who was guilty of dishonest practices, was compelled to read his condemnation in the reception he met with in society. He was a marked man, a discountenanced man, a shunned man. He was taught at once, that he could not forget his integrity, without forfeiting his standing in the community. He could not practice dishonesty to-day, and meet the cordial shake of the hand to-morrow. The tone of moral feeling was too high for that. Men, *the men* of whom I speak, had not learnt that pliability of principle, which can recognize, upon equal terms, the man who has honesty, and the man who has none. And it was well to mark this distinction: it was

well—for the honour of God, and for the good of society, to make it to be known and felt. Mere honesty in business transactions, does not *constitute* religion; but it is a *part* of religion; and so *essential* a part, that there is no true religion without it. What is all profession worth, my brethren, without the principle of *integrity*? What is the faith worth, that does not produce this? What is the religious experience worth, that does not pre-suppose it? What are the hopes and assurances of salvation worth, that are not associated with it? All wretched fallacies—all artifices of Satan, to blind the moral perceptions, and secure as his victims, the unhappy souls that are deceived by them. I believe that what are termed evangelical doctrines, are the doctrines of Christ: I believe that experimental piety, is a genuine part of Christ's religion: I believe that justification is simply through faith—regeneration by the Spirit of God—that the love of Christ must be shed abroad in the heart, to prepare a soul for heaven; but at the same time, I regard as the most wretched delusion, or the most arrant hypocrisy, all pretences to this faith—or justification—or regeneration—or love to Christ, that are not associated with honesty, integrity and uprightness in our dealings with our fellow-men. What,—deceit and experimental religion united—dishonesty and pardon combined—fraud and assurances of salvation in partnership! As well might you attempt to blend the midnight darkness with the glories of the noon-day sun, as to mingle these discordant elements. You may combine dishonesty with *false* hopes and *false* assurances, and ebullitions of mere *animal* feeling; but you cannot associate it with that pure and undefiled religion which cometh down from the Father of lights, and which prepares the soul of its possessor for that holy Heaven where He reigns.

4. But I pass on to another feature in the character of the men I am describing, which, from the peculiar circum-

stances in which they were placed, would necessarily occupy a more prominent position than others, in any portrait that might be drawn of them. *They were loyal to their earthly Sovereign.* What is Loyalty? Solomon has defined it for us, when he says, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change."* St. Peter shews us the New Testament sanction for it, when he lays down the rule, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."† And St. Paul states the basis of this allegiance when he tells us that, "the Powers that be are ordained of God,"‡ But you ask, perhaps,—are we then to believe in the exploded doctrine of *the Divine right of kings*? I answer, *No*: there is no necessity for *this*. The principles laid down in the passages I have quoted, do not mention this, or require us to subscribe to it. What they *do* assert is that, civil government is an ordinance of man, established for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; and that such Government has the sanction of God: He approves of it: He authorises it: He stamps the seal of His approbation upon the exercise of such powers, and requires Christians to submit to them. If they live under a monarchical government, as was the case with the Christians to whom St. Paul and St. Peter wrote, then their allegiance is due to the monarch of the realm and to all the subordinate officers who are appointed for the execution of its laws. But, perhaps, you ask again, must this submission be rendered *under all circumstances*? Will nothing justify departure from it? To this I reply that "the obligation of subjects and sovereigns is reciprocal."§ Allegiance is

*Prov. xiv., 21.

†1 Peter ii., 13.

‡Rom. xiii., 1.

§Paley's Philosophy, Vol. II., p. 155.

therefore not unconditional. Cases may by possibility occur, when to maintain submission would be to surrender the charter of a nation's liberties, and to entail slavery upon future generations. No Divine Law, that I am aware of, exacts this at our hands. But remember it is the nation's interests, and not the interests of a mere fractional part of it, that must be imperilled, to present such a case of necessity. Not every invasion of the subject's rights, not every abuse of power, or neglect of duty justifies this resistance. It is the *common* interest, and not the *private* interest of a particular part, that is to be regarded. The truly loyal subject will fix his eyes upon this point, and act accordingly. He will uphold, by all legitimate means his nation's rights, and at the same time remember, that "obedience to the state is to be numbered amongst the relative duties of human life, for the transgression of which we shall be responsible at the tribunal of Divine Justice."* He will be a zealous advocate for the public good, and at the same time exemplify the wise man's precept—"My son, fear the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change." Now, it was this principle, I presume, that influenced the men who came to this Province in 1783. They looked upon the control that was exercised by the mother country, "as among their rights, not as among their wrongs; as a benefit, not a grievance; as a security for their liberty, not as a badge of servitude."† and they demonstrated their sincerity in this profession. They proved that the principle upon which they acted was dearer to them than earthly possessions; that rather than surrender it, they would consent to exchange the mansion for the hut, the lawn for the forest, and the city for the lonely wilderness. And we cannot but honour their memories for the integrity they displayed in doing so.

*Paley's Philosophy, vol. ii., p. 154.

†Burke on French Revolution, p. 31.

II. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh." We have marked in a few particulars, the *characteristics* of the former, the generation that has well nigh passed;—what are the *counsels* that ought to be addressed to the latter, the generation that is to come in its place?

1. One very obvious one is this—*avoid the evils of the age in which you live.* I am not disposed to deny what is termed the *progress of the age*, or to depreciate its real merits. Science rapidly advances. Her researches are deep, her discoveries vast and brilliant. Missionary zeal too is awakened; and religious effort called forth beyond former precedent. But our age has a dark side, as well as a bright one: it has its dangers as well as its encouragements, its snares as well as its safe-guards. Would you escape these snares? Then set your face like a flint against the *infidelity, profaneness, insubordination, dishonesty, intemperance, conformity to worldly principles—and idolatry of gold*, which you witness on every hand. Do not be drawn into these things by the example of others. Do not think lightly of them because many view them in this way. Follow not the multitude to do evil. Guilt is not palliated by the numbers who contract it. Multitudes cannot sanctify what God pronounces unclean.

2. Another very obvious counsel arising from our subject is this. *Follow the example of your predecessors, as far as that example was right.* Human example is, at best defective. A fallen being cannot present to us a perfect model. Yet we may often discover in weak and fallible man, the exemplification of noble principles which we ought to cultivate and exemplify. We trace these in the character of the Loyalists. Follow then their example in *these respects*: imitate them *as far as they walked with God.* Cherish a veneration for the *Bible*, for the *Sabbath*, for the *ordinances*, for the *house of God.* Maintain a strict *integrity*

in your dealings with men. Shun, yea abhor, the very thought of a fraudulent transaction. And cultivate with increasing diligence, that spirit of *submission to lawful authority* which lies at the foundation of loyalty to your earthly Sovereign. Unless that spirit be acquired and cherished in this world, it is difficult to understand how the soul is to acquire it afterwards, or how, without it, we can be prepared to take our station in a world where Angels and Archangels, principalities and powers are all in due subordination to each other and to their God.

Allow me here to express an earnest hope, that we may all evince this spirit on the coming Fast day. I hope, my brethren! that we shall see our Churches crowded on that occasion—that every member of our Church will be eager to comply with the summons, that he will recognize the right of his earthly Monarch to call for such a National acknowledgment, and hasten to prostrate himself in humiliation before the Sovereign of the Universe. It is not enough for us to admit that God rules amidst the armies of heaven: we must confess, with equal faith that He reigns in the kingdoms of men. In doing this, we shall be discharging a duty which we owe to God, and walking in the steps of that generation which has preceded us in these earthly scenes, and has now passed on to its account at the bar of Christ.

3. One further counsel shall close my remarks. Remember that your *own* generation, like that of your predecessors, must soon be a *past one*; and that therefore *Eternity*, not *time*, should be the object of your supreme concern. Why did Solomon say—"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh"? Was it to repeat a truism, to state a self-evident proposition, to inform us of what everybody knows? No, my brethren,—it was to enforce upon us this vital truth, that *nothing but eternity can give value to the things of time*; that if you exclude eter-

nity from your thoughts, if you leave it out of your calculation, then everything on earth, is but "vanity and vexation of spirit," for even *man*, the noblest of God's works below, is, in that case, but a passing shadow—here to-day—away to-morrow—busy with trifles for an hour, and then consigned to an eternal oblivion. The meaning of Solomon then was—take *Eternity* into the account. View man and the whole world in reference to *Eternity*. As you see generation after generation passing away, reflect that they are gone into *Eternity*. As you feel that you are travelling on the journey of life yourselves, remember that you are travelling to *Eternity*, and ask yourselves whether you are prepared for that *Eternity*? To be prepared for this, my brethren, you must have forgiveness through the blood of Christ, and a heart sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Without these things, you cannot enter Heaven; with them you cannot be excluded from it. As certainly as you receive these blessings through the grace of God, so certainly will you find admission into the Heaven of God. You will then indeed have done with wars and tumults, with national distinctions, and allegiance to earthly Sovereigns, and yet there will be scope in those high realms for the exercise of principles which have led to truth, honesty, and loyalty, during your abode on earth.—AMEN!